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ACTION ARA-14

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /092 W
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R 181233Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7043
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6407

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM AR PINT PINS
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDUP: HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

1. THE MOTHERS GROUP----

THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO ARE BEING ALLOWED BY POLICE AUTHORITIES TO HOLD SHORT, PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS EACH THURSDAY AFTERNOON. THE ARRESTS OF OVER 200 MOTHERS LAST OCTOBER, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF 13 MOTHERS' GROUP SUPPORTERS IN DECEMBER, THE POLICE CHASING OF MOTHERS OFF THE PLAZA IN MID-MARCH AND THE COUNTER DEMONSTRATION HARASSMENT OF THE MOTHERS DURING THE MUNDIAL ALL PRODUCED ADVERSE PUBLICITY TO THE GOVERNMENT ABROAD. MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS WRONGLY BELIEVED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD RESUME ITS EFFORTS TO HALT THE MOTHERS' THURSDAY DEMONSTRATIONS ONCE THE WORLD CUP ENDED. HOWEVER, AFTER THEIR EXTENSIVE JUNE TV EXPOSURE THE MOTHERS HAVE BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN ARGENTINA AND THIS HAS PERHAPS GIVEN THEM A MEASURE PATINA OF PROTECTION.

THE NUMBERS OF MOTHERS DEMONSTRATING APPEARS TO HAVE STABILIZED AT ABOUT 100 IN THE RAIN AND

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AROUND 200 ON SUNNY DAYS. HOWEVER, THE MOTHERS GROUP HAS SWELLED OVER 300 IN THE PAST WHEN IT

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

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APPEARED THAT THE CHANCE OF POLICE HARASSMENT WAS MINIMAL OR WHEN THE FAMILIES' 'GRAPE-VINE' SIGNALLED SOME IMPENDING PROGRESS. THAT THE MOTHERS ARE BECOMING AN ESTABLISHED PART OF THE LOCAL SCENE IS UNDERSCORED BY THE FACT THAT SEVERAL SPANISH LANGUAGE METROPOLITAN DAILIES HAVE RUN SHORT STORIES ON THE MOTHERS' GATHERINGS LATELY.

2. FAMILIARES DE DESAPARECIDOS----

THE ORGANIZATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF DISAPPEARED AND DETAINED PERSONS (FDD) CONTINUES COLLECTING INFORMATION AND MAKING PRESENTATIONS TO THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. IN THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS ITS REPRESENTATIVES HAVE MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME COURT, CALLED ON MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL SECURITY, SAN ROMAN, AND MET WITH NAVY CHIEF MASSERA'S PERSONAL SECRETARY, CAPTAIN SARATEQUI.

THE FDD ISSUES PERIODIC PETITIONS CALLING FOR THE LOCATING OF THE DISAPPEARED, RECOGNITION OF THOSE SECRETLY DETAINED, FREEING DETAINEES HELD WITHOUT CHARGES, RESTORING THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF OPTION AND JUDGING THOSE CHARGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND NATIONAL LAWS. THE FDD'S JUNE REPORT STATED THAT IT HAD RECORDED 116 DISAPPEARANCE CASES THIS YEAR THROUGH THE END OF MAY--37 FROM THE FEDERAL CAPITAL, 64 FROM BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE AND 11 CASES FROM THE INTERIOR.

3. PERMANENT ASSEMBLY-----
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THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (APDH) HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE. IT SUFFERED A MAJOR SETBACK WHEN ITS SECOND APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT IN THE CASE OF SMITH VS. VIDELA WAS REJECTED RECENTLY FOR LACK OF JURISDICTION. THE ASSEMBLY LAST WEEK PRESENTED ANOTHER LIST OF 500 MORE DISAPPEARED PERSONS TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, BRINGING THE TOTAL OF PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED DISAPPEARED CASES TO JUST OVER 3,000. (ASSEMBLY MEMBERS ALSO PUBLICLY CORRECTED THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S PREVIOUS REBUTTAL REGARDING A NUMBER OF THE CASES ON THE MAY 17 LA PRENSA LIST.)

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THE ASSEMBLY'S MORE OPEN AND AGGRESSIVE POLICY HAS GAINED IT INCREASED MANPOWER AND LOCAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT. IT HAS JUST MOVED TO MORE SPACIOUS OFFICES. MORE VOLUNTEER WORKERS ARE AVAILABLE AND FUNDS ARE MORE AVAILABLE.

THE NEXT MAJOR TASK OF THE ASSEMBLY IS TO DECIDE HOW IT CAN BEST SUPPORT THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT WRITING PROJECT ON ARGENTINA. TWO PROPOSALS WILL BE PUT FORWARD FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. THE FIRST IS FOR THE ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE THE IAHRC COPIES OF THE 3,000 PLUS SIGNED DISAPPEARANCE CASE TESTIMONIALS WHICH IT HAS ON FILE. SECOND IS THE PROPOSAL FOR THE ASSEMBLY TO FINANCE THE TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON OF WITNESSES TO APPEAR BEFORE THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. (THE ASSEMBLY'S JUDGMENT IS THAT IAHRC VISIT IS NOT GOING TO TAKE PLACE.) (SEE SEPTTEL). A CHANGE IN MOOD HAS TAKEN PLACE AT THE ASSEMBLY ITS EARLIER CONCERNS THAT THE PUBLIC WOULD CONVIENTLY FORGET THE DISAPPEARANCE ISSUE APPEAR TO HAVE SUBSIDED. THE LARGE AMOUNT OF PRESS ATTENTION DURING THE MUNDIAL, TO ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, THE NAVY'S PROPOSAL FOR A LIST OF THE DEAD,

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STRONGER U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVES, RENEWED LEGAL EFFORTS AND THE UPCOMING INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S STUDY PLUS A REPORTEDLY

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POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM LOCAL POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVERS
TO THE MAY 17 PUBLICATION IN LA PRENSA OF THE LIST OF THE DISAPPEARED
S
ARE ALL FACTORS ENCOURAGING THE ASSEMBLY'S LEADERSHIP.

4. SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY----

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (PST) RECENTLY
APPEALED TO THE ARGENTINE SUPREME COURT ASKING
FOR ITS INTERVENTION IN REMEDYING THE SERIOUS
SITUATION FACED BY ITS MEMBERSHIP. THE PARTY'S
BRIEF, WHICH CLOSELY FOLLOWED THE LINES OF THE
PERMANENT ASSEMBLY'S ARGUMENT IN THE SMITH CASE,
POINTS OUT THAT 55 MEMBERS OF THE PST HAVE DIS-
APPEARED SINCE MARCH 1976 BECAUSE OF THEIR
NON-VIOLENT SOCIALIST PRINCIPLES. THE BRIEF
POINTS OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THE HABEAS CORPUS
PETITIONS FILED IN THE INDIVIDUAL CASES RECEIVED
NEGATIVE REPLIES BY THE EXECUTIVE, THERE IS
SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE INDICATING THAT THE DETEN-
TIONS OF THE PST MEMBERS WERE IN FACT UNDERTAKEN
BY AGENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER.

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5. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ATTACKED----

AMNESTY, WHICH HAS NO LOCAL CHAPTER, HAS BEEN
THE FOCUS OF SEVERE PRESS CRITICISM IN RECENT
WEEKS. THE JULY 7 ISSUE OF COMFIRMADO CONTAINED
AN ARTICLE ATTACKING AMNESTY FOR ITS ALLEGED LEFTIST BIAS.
THE ARTICLE POINTED OUT THAT OF 18 STUDIES CONDUCTED
BY AI IN '76 AND '77--ONLY TWO DEALT WITH MARXIST
COUNTRIES.

ON AUGUST 1, LA NACION RAN AN EFE WIRE STORY
REPORTING THAT AN AI SPOKESMAN IN BONN HAD
ADMITTED THAT AMNESTY MAINTAINS A DANISH CENTER
FOR THE "TORTURE OF PIGS DESIGNED TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF ELECTRICITY." THIS STORY
RECEIVED FURTHER PLAY ON AT LEAST ONE MAJOR RADIO

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STATION LATER IN THE WEEK.

FINALLY, THE ARCHBISHOP PLAZA OF LA PLATA
MADE PUBLIC IN LATE JULY HIS REPLY TO AN AMNESTY
USA INQUIRY ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN
ARGENTINA. THE ARCHBISHOP'S RHETORICAL RESPONSE
ASKED WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE UNITED STATES
WITH RESPECT TO PUERTO RICANS, AMERICAN INDIANS,
THE ASSASSINS OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND MARTIN
LUTHER KING, ABORTION, AND THE EXPORT OF BIRTH
CONTROL DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY.
CASTRO

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